

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Extension of Time

A request for a two month extension of the period for response to the Office Action mailed on March 21, 2008 is enclosed. The extended period for response expires on August 21, 2008.

Claim Status

Claims 1-18 were presented. Claims 1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 14 and 15 are canceled without prejudice. Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 16-18 are amended. New claims 19-21 are added. Thus, claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 16-21 are now pending.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 112

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. In particular, the Action asserts that the phrase “wherein the reaction information display means has a user icon display means that controls to define, in part of the provider side display device, a user icons collective display area in which a plural number of user icon display areas made to correspond to the respective user side terminal devices are put in order” is confusing and not clearly understood.

In response, the disputed phrase in claim 2 is amended to read as follows:

...wherein the reaction information display means has a user icon display means that defines, in part of the provider side display device, a user icons collective display area including a plural number of user icon display areas corresponding to the respective user side terminal devices, and displays, using icons, information corresponding to the reaction information from the respective user side terminal devices in corresponding user icon display areas...

Applicant submits that this phrase is clear and definite, and that claim 2 is in full compliance with 35 USC 112. Moreover, although claims 5, 9, 12 and 16 are

not rejected under 35 USC 112, applicant notes that these claims include similar phrases. Therefore, claims 5, 9, 12 and 16 are amended in the same fashion as claim 2 and are also in compliance with 35 USC 112.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 102

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-8, 10, 11, 13-15, 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Appelman (US 6,539,421). Claims 1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 14, and 15 are canceled, without prejudice, rendering their rejections moot. With respect to claims 3, 6, 10, 13, 17 and 18, applicant traverses the rejections, and amends claims 3, 6, 10, 13 and 17 to further clarify the present invention.

Claims 3, 6, 10, 13 and 17 each recite "evaluated object information" that is transmitted from a provider (teacher) side terminal device to a user (student) side terminal device. Evaluated object information is defined in applicant's specification at page 17, lines 10-18, as information transmitted by the provider (teacher) to the users (students) that is the subject of evaluation by the students. The evaluated object information may include, for example, graphic, image and voice information.

The Action asserts that Appelman discloses the claimed evaluated object information in FIG. 5. However, Appelman's FIG. 5 is merely a screen shot showing three instant message windows 130a, 130b and 130c. The discussion of FIG. 5 at col. 2, lines 32-43, contains nothing of relevance to applicant's claimed evaluated object information. Thus, applicant disagrees that Appelman's FIG. 5 is of any relevance to the claimed evaluated object information.

Moreover, the Action asserts throughout that "The Examiner notes that an 'evaluated object information' is metadata". Applicant disagrees with this statement and, in any event, does not understand its relevance. First, metadata is commonly understood as "data about data", i.e. information about the format, context, control, organizational structure, etc. of the data. As noted above, "evaluated object information" is defined in applicant's specification as information transmitted by the provider (teacher) to the users (students) that is the subject of evaluation by the students, and may include graphic, image and voice information.

Such information clearly does not correspond to the commonly understood meaning of metadata, and applicant therefore traverses the assertion by the Examiner that applicant's claimed evaluated object information is metadata.

Moreover, applicant fails to understand the relevance of "metadata" in the context of Appelman's FIG. 5. As noted above, Appelman's FIG. 5 is merely a screen shot showing three instant message windows 130a, 130b and 130c. There is no disclosure or discussion of metadata in conjunction with FIG. 5, and in fact the word "metadata" does not even appear in Appelman. Thus, applicant does not understand the relevance of either metadata or Appelman's FIG. 5 to the claimed evaluated object information. For at least this reason, the rejections of claims 3, 6, 10, 13, 17 and 18 under 35 USC 102(b) should be withdrawn.

Moreover, claims 3, 6, 10, 13 and 17 are amended into independent form, and are amended to further define the display of the evaluated object information as sampled graphic information in conjunction with a reaction information transition graph. Claim 3, for example, is amended to recite:

...the communication information reproduction means acquires graphic information sampled at certain intervals as the evaluated object information, acquires a reaction information transition graph showing a transition of sums in every sampling period of the number of pieces of the reaction information corresponding to the evaluated object information, and reproduces and displays the graphic information and the reaction information transition graph adjacent to each other on the provider side display device.

Claims 6, 10, 13 and 17 are amended in similar fashion. These amendments find support in applicant's specification, for example, at page 39, line 26 to page 40, line 2; page 40, line 25 to page 41, line 9; page 42, lines 10-16; and FIG. 19. Appelman does not teach or suggest those features. Appelman does not teach or suggest acquiring graphic information sampled at a certain intervals as evaluated object information, acquiring a reaction information transition graph showing a

transition of sums in every sampling period of the number of pieces of the reaction information corresponding to the evaluated object information, and displaying the graphic information and reaction information transition graph adjacent to each other.

Thus, claims 3, 6, 10, 13 and 17, as amended, contain multiple features that are not disclosed by Appelman. Therefore, claims 3, 6, 10, 13 and 17 are not anticipated by Appelman, and the rejections of these claims and claim 18 depending therefrom under 35 USC 102 should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103

Claims 2, 5, 9, 12 and 16 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Appelman in view of Canfield (US 7,127,685). In response, applicant traverses the rejections, and amends claims 2, 5, 9, 12 and 16 into independent form and to further clarify the invention.

Claims 2, 5, 9, 12 and 16, as discussed with respect to claims 3, 6, 10, 13 and 17, each recite “evaluated object information” that is transmitted from a provider (teacher) side terminal device to a user (student) side terminal device. As discussed above, Appelman fails to disclose such information. Canfield, which is directed at an instant message system and is relied on for its use of icons to convey emotion, does not remedy this deficiency of Appelman. Thus, for at least this reason, the rejections of claims 2, 5, 9, 12 and 16 under 35 USC 103(a) should be withdrawn.

Moreover, claims 2, 5, 9, 12 and 16 are amended into independent form, and are amended to further define that colors of icons in the user icon display areas are changed according to items of the reaction information. Claim 2, for example, is amended to recite:

... the user icon display means changes colors of the icons displayed in the user icon display areas according to items of the reaction information.

Claims 5, 9, 12 and 16 are amended in similar fashion. These amendments find support in applicant's specification, for example, at page 11, lines 1-3. Reaction information is described in applicant's specification as information indicating the degree of understanding by a student of the evaluated object information or information indicating an answer by a student to displayed choice information (page 21, lines 15-20). Thus, claims 2, 5, 9, 12 and 16, as amended, require a change in color of an icon in relation to a student's reaction to evaluated object information, i.e., their degree of understanding or answer choice. Canfield's mere illustration of a happy face icon in an instant messaging window does not constitute a disclosure or suggestion of this feature.

Thus, claims 2, 5, 9, 12 and 16, as amended, contain multiple features that are not disclosed or suggested by Appelman and/or Canfield. Therefore, claims 2, 5, 9, 12 and 16 are not obvious over Appelman in view of Canfield, and the rejections of these claims under 35 USC 103(a) should be withdrawn.

Additional Claim Amendments and New Claims

Additional, minor amendments are made to claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 16-18 to improve their readability and clarity. Claims 12, 13, 16 and 17, which are directed to a computer program, are amended to recite that the program is embodied in a computer-readable medium, for compliance with 35 USC 101. New claims 19-21 depend, respectively, from claims 13, 16 and 17, and further recite a recording medium on which the programs are recorded.

Conclusion

This application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to resolve any issues that remain after consideration and entry of this amendment.

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Any fees due with this response may be charged to our Deposit Account No.
50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
HOGAN & HARTSON L.L.P.

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